



WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON INVASIVE SPECIES

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For Immediate Release

FEDERAL AND STATE OFFICIALS CONCERNED ABOUT INVASION OF EMERALD ASH BORER

Madison -- Federal and State agencies are working together to formulate an action plan for detection and suppression of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) within Wisconsin's Forests. The highly destructive bug, an exotic pest native to Asia, belongs to a group of insects known as metallic wood-boring beetles. The beetle attacks several species of ash trees including white, green and black ash, boring into and eventually killing the tree. Transmission of this pest is accelerated by transportation of larvae in logs, firewood and nursery stock. As an invasive species, emerald ash borer is a concern to Governor Jim Doyle: "Ash trees are not only an important part of Wisconsin forests, they are vital to the timber industry and the beauty of our urban areas. By taking a proactive approach through early detection and suppression of this invasive insect, we may be able to avoid the devastation that Michigan has experienced."

Although there have been NO confirmed sightings in the State of Wisconsin, officials are concerned because this tiny pest has spread across lower Michigan at an alarming rate, killing millions of trees. Isolated infestations have also been reported in Ohio, Indiana, Maryland and Windsor, Ontario. A recent emerald ash borer finding in the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan is a grave concern to Wisconsin; no significant geological barriers such as Lake Michigan exist to slow the spread of this invasive into our state, as was previously hoped when findings were confined to lower Michigan.

Ash trees are quite abundant in Wisconsin, with estimates as high as 700 million trees total, and are commonly found in both urban and forest settings. An ash tree is most easily identified by its opposite branching pattern and compound leaves with 5-11 leaflets. Leaflets are moderately toothed and may be stalked or sessile. Ash trees contribute to the forest structure that is required by many wildlife species, including the state-threatened red-shouldered hawk that needs large tracts of floodplain forest to survive. Birds such as wood ducks and cardinals also use ash fruits as a

food source. Also important in the forest products industry, ash is often used for making furniture, tool handles, baseball bats and skis.

Many agencies, including the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), University of Wisconsin, USDA Forest Service, and Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) have initiated development of a state action plan to detect and suppress the Emerald Ash Borer. Wisconsin officials have been observing Michigan, Ohio and Indiana's plan of attack and are planning a similar approach. The agencies began surveying for the presence of EAB in Wisconsin 2004, focusing on forests, parks, tree nurseries and campgrounds, locations where infested firewood could serve as a source of EAB spread.

Governor Doyle emphasizes the role the public can play in this issue: "All of us, as Wisconsin citizens, can help protect our ash resource by avoiding practices that can introduce and spread this pest as well as other forest pests. Remember: If you bring it, burn it!" This means that if you bring firewood to a campground or park, don't leave any; burn it all. Firewood should only be purchased from local vendors, not out-of-state vendors. Citizens should also maintain the health of ash trees on their property by watering during dry periods and protecting them from damage; ash borers and other forest pests are attracted to stressed trees. The public is also asked to report potential EAB sightings to DATCP's toll free number (1-800-462-2803). For more information on the Emerald Ash Borer and Wisconsin's plans to fight the pest, visit the following websites:

<http://www.entomology.wisc.edu/emeraldashborer/>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/Forestry/FH/Ash/index.html>

Text for this news release was provided by the United States Forest Service. This news release is sponsored by the Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species. The Wisconsin State Legislature created the Council, to which Governor Doyle appointed 13 members. The Council's mission is to prevent and reduce the harmful impacts of invasive species on Wisconsin's environment and economy, as well as human well-being. Funding for this news release was provided by the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the Natural Resource Foundation's C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program.